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THE ROUND TABLE

CHECK SHEETS FOR THE ORAL INVENTORY

1. Troubles with enunciation and pronunciation

We need only discover what *gross* mispronunciations are common in the school and what difficulties with enunciation cause most of the indistinctness in our pupils' speech. Only a few commonest troubles, actually noted this year and generally recognized as apparently universal difficulties, are listed. Additions and notes on such other matters as undesirable posture in class recitations, are greatly needed.

A. Wrong sounds, generally rated "vulgar":

w'ich, w'at, w'en; What's it fur (for)? Git, forgit, sich, aginst, ketch, sech, goil (girl), jist, wit' (with), erl (oil); acrosst cidy (city).
Others:

B. Indistinctness of enunciation due to voice pitched too low; mumbling; talking behind closed teeth:

(1) Clipping and swallowing syllables:

struck'm *for* struck him *or* them; I d'no *for* I don't know; d'yu *for* did you? whatsher *for* what do (did) you? chwing gum (chewing); snow'n *for* snowing; gover'ment; go'n *for* going; a-go'nto, I'm gonna; winne *for* window; d'cided, s'prised, d'scovered.

(2) Swallowed *l*:

wi(l) *for* well.

(3) Swallowed *t*:

bat'(l), immort(l); you gotta *for* you've got to.

Others:

What, of course, is wanted is not overprecise and painful speech, but really clear and comfortably comprehensible utterance. We can make it clear that not loudness, but distinctness and reasonable slowness, make one easily heard—that a whisper can be perfectly audible in even a hall or a theater.

2. Troubles with grammar and idiom

A. Case of pronouns (types):

It is her, them, him; John and me went; Him and Tom were . . . ;
With John and I.

B. Principal parts of verbs:

come (past tense); says, runs (past); had ought; has drank; done (past); seen (past).

Others:

C. Verb confusions:

lay down; has laid down; is laying down; laid down (past); learned me to; set still; setting still; leave it go, *or* leave go of it; can I . . . ? ain't (*for* have *or* has).

Others:

D. Misagreement of verb with subject (types):

he, she, it don't; there is six chairs (was); there is a man and two women; one of the ships are; he with his friends are; you or we was; they, the men was.

Others:

E. Adverbs and adjectives:

he plays good; it works fine.

Others:

F. Double negatives:

haven't got none; "ain't got none" (should be scored both ^{here} and for "ain't"); can't find it nowhere; haven't hardly any.

Others:

G. False idiom (gross examples only):

got it off of John; was left back in sixth grade; a apple; a exciting tale; them apples; was to the circus.

Others:

H. Preposition for conjunction:

do it like I do; looked like he was sick; sunsets like they have in.

Others:

I. Subjunctives (types):

Wish he would have been here (*for* had been); If he would ha ve gone (*for* had gone); If this would happen (*for* should); Wish he didn't give (*for* hadn't given); If I was you (sharply contrary to fact only).

Others:

J. Pronoun agreement (types):

A pupil studies their lesson; Everybody, somebody, no one does their work.

Others:

It is not meant that this inventory consider any but *gross errors*—no such forms as *have got*, *if* for *whether*, *lots of money*, *get* for *become*; *badly* for *very much*; *will* for *shall*, in ordinary simple futures, first person, *try and go*, *this far*, *that much*, or *slow* and *quick* as adverbs. All these, *if they are errors*, are relatively mild and unimportant; many of them are recognized as quite good colloquial (informal, conversational) usage. But we *do* need to know all the *serious speech errors* of our pupils.

3. Gross incoherence in sentence

This part of the inventory can be made the most valuable of all if specific examples of sentences that really are difficult to follow and understand can be noted down just as they are spoken. This is difficult, but most profitable. The following types are suggested as worth watching specifically:

A. "Shifted sentence plan":

At the age of six years my grandparents died; Walking down the hall, the parlor is on the right; After eating our dinner the old horse took us to Yonkers.

B. Strung-together sentences with *and*, *so*, *because*, etc. Recitations of some length are often just one bad sentence. I copied down one by a tenth-grade boy, with some twelve clauses and these three connectives (*and*, *so*, etc.) repeated as the only cement.

C. Really puzzling or ludicrous reference of pronouns or placing of modifiers:

As the bottles weren't kept clean by the farmers the dairymen now wash all of them; On this car it says, etc.

D. Wrong connective, misexpressing the relation:

Although (as) I have never seen you you might think it strange for me to write; I haven't many mistakes on the test, but (and) I hope you won't find many here; The shops each have a special work to do, such as, one shop has the passenger cars to make . . . and then the test plant is a great place.

E. Bad omissions and redundancies:

. . . the teacher to whom I report to; . . . told us that when we came that they were not ready; . . . men whom he could not tell whether they were friends or foes; . . . a trick play which opposing teams were sure to be baffled; . . . not to turn in more cattle than the grass in the pasture.

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